

PUBLIC INFORMATION & EDUCATION

Involving the People of the Basin

Native beach rose,
the official flower of
the State of New York.

AN AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVER OR TWO?

*Our Basin Rivers Among
the First Nominations*

President Clinton's 1997 announcement of a new initiative to enhance river-related economic revitalization, natural resource protection, and historical and cultural resource preservation created excitement in the Delaware River Basin and around the country. The initiative solicited nominations of rivers and river reaches to be the first 10 "American Heritage Rivers." These 10 will be selected from the 126 rivers that were nominated by the December 10, 1997, deadline.

Among the nominated rivers are the Delaware River main stem and, also in the Delaware River Basin, the Beaverkill in New York and the Lehigh and Schuylkill

Rivers in Pennsylvania. A decision on these and the other 122 nominated rivers is expected in the spring of 1998.

The 330-mile-long Delaware River main stem from Hancock, N.Y., to the mouth of Delaware Bay was jointly nominated by the Delaware River Basin Commission and the Delaware River Greenway Partnership. The nomination package was developed by an *ad hoc* committee with members from the Commission; the Heritage Conservancy, which hosts the Greenway Partnership; the Delaware & Raritan Greenway; the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control. Letters from dozens of groups, agencies, governmental units, legislators, and individuals endorsed the river's nomination.

The Delaware River's American Heritage Rivers nomination recognizes that four distinct planning activities have occurred along the river in recent years. Collectively these plans cover the entire length of the Delaware River, including Delaware Bay. Specifically, the plans are the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River's "River Management Plan," the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area's "General Management Plan," the "Lower Delaware River Management Plan" prepared for the proposed Lower Delaware national recreational river, and the Delaware Estuary Program's "Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary." The nomination noted that these plans contain numerous common goals derived from each of the four public planning processes and that these goals, therefore, collectively represent a Delaware River community vision.

The overall thrust of a Delaware River American Heritage River would be to pull these four major river planning activities under one umbrella and to develop common programs in five areas: eco-tourism/heritage tourism promotion, signage, land-use guidance for sustainable development, water quality monitoring, and regional information management.

The placid, classic riverfront of Bristol, Pa., evidences the long heritage going back to Colonial times that so many of the Delaware River's towns and cities share, amply justifying the river's proposed designation as an American Heritage River.



Justification of the Delaware River as an American Heritage River included five notable historical distinctions, five notable natural and scenic resource distinctions, and five notable economic and cultural distinctions. These unique aspects of the Delaware River include Washington's Crossing of the Delaware, the Delaware as one of the last large rivers without a dam on its main stem, the Delaware as being within a 500-mile radius of 40 percent of the U.S. population and 60 percent of Canada's, and others. The full nomination package is available from the Commission.

DELAWARE RIVER AND LEHIGH VALLEY SOJOURNS

Renewed Waterways Nourish the Soul

Sojourn: abide for a time. And abide they did, in their dozens and for days along the developed and wild sections of the Upper Delaware and the Lehigh. Via canoe and kayak they floated and paddled down the rivers, through placid pools and white-water rapids, viewing the June landscape from a vantage seldom seen and long neglected. No longer a fetid, dying waste conduit for much of America's smokestack industry over many generations, the rivers now teem with restored aquatic life, their clean waters open to recreational activities of all sorts on and around them. And not just for short demonstration stretches, but for the whole lengths of the rivers, requiring many days of sojourning to traverse.

In June 1997, both the Delaware and the Lehigh were hosts to Sojourns—organized educational and recreational expeditions of up to eight days in length.

Lehigh Legacy Sojourn

The Lehigh Sojourn, called the Lehigh Legacy Sojourn, was organized to help boaters appreciate the scenic waterway from the vantage point of raft and canoe. The Sojourn was the 1997 version of an eight-year-old Pennsylvania initiative to promote the Poster River of the Year, intended to educate the public to the recreational resources of the state's waterways. Sojourners could abide for one day or up to six days as they floated or paddled down the Lehigh gorge 70 miles from White Haven to Easton, Pa. The upper reaches were for rafters in the occasional patches of turbulent white water, while the lower portions past Jim Thorpe lent themselves more to contemplative canoeing. Unfortunately, low water levels precluded rafting for part of the journey, so bicycling along the banks had to suffice. Interspersed with on-the-water activities were lectures and demonstrations about the history of the region, the geology and ecology, not to mention food and drink, music, and storytelling. Day trippers, those who

***“Tonight, I announce
that this year I will
designate 10 American
Heritage Rivers to help
communities alongside
them to revitalize their
waterfront and clean up
pollution.”***

***– President Clinton
State of the
Union Address
February 4, 1997***

signed on for one leg of the six-day journey, boarded vans each evening for return to their boarding locations, while those in for the longer haul set up camp. Some 112 adventurers signed up for all or part of the trip—41 especially hardy ones signed on for the entire voyage.

Delaware River Sojourn

A week before the Lehigh Legacy, the Delaware River Sojourn shoved off at Deposit, N.Y., for a 110-mile canoe and kayak trip down the river to the Delaware Canal, ending in New Hope, Pa. The eight-day trip, the third annual Delaware Sojourn, was organized by a partnership of various public and private groups, including the Heritage Conservancy of Doylestown, Pa., the National Park Service, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, with the active participation of and promotion by the DRBC.

As many as 60 people took part in each day's activities, some of them a little wetter for the wear but spirits undamped when their canoes capsized. Eighteen hardy voyagers became "through trippers," having stayed the course for the entire distance. DRBC Executive Director Jerry Hansler served as "Lord Admiral of the Delaware" for the Sojourn—an honor that goes all the way back to Dan Skinner, the first lumber rafter down the Delaware (1767) and, thus, the first Lord Admiral.



LEFT: The end of the trail: Tired survivors of the 1997 Delaware River Sojourn paddle into New Hope, Pa., on the Pennsylvania Delaware Canal paralleling the river. Their arrival was to the accompaniment of the fifes and drums of the Coryellis Ferry Militia.

INSET: "Lord Admiral of the Delaware," Executive Director Gerald M. Hansler (right) discusses the finer points of river rafting and canoeing with U.S. Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey, Jr. (D., N.Y., 26th District).

WONDERFUL PROGRAM

Teachers Delve into the Delaware

A committee of over 50 dedicated partners hosted a week-long workshop for 25 teachers in July 1997 on resource issues affecting the Delaware Estuary.

The teachers, who came from classrooms in 17 counties in the tri-state area (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware) studied the ecological, historical, social, economic, agricultural, and political impacts on the region.

They swam with dolphins at Cape Henlopen, Del., checked out urban planning in Philadelphia, feasted on blue crabs, journeyed across Delaware Bay in an oyster schooner, and walked the historic streets of Burlington, N.J.

Remarked one Pennsylvania teacher when it was over: "This experience has changed my focus. I am filled with a sense of wonder coupled with knowledge. I hope to pass along these tools to my students. It is a true gift to feel the synergistic effect the participants in this program had on each other."

Commission staff played an active role in the program, lecturing on the overall health of the estuary and hosting a work session on the application of computer technology to water resource management.

The workshop, titled the Delaware Estuary Educational Institute, ran from July 25 to July 30. It was funded by the Delaware Estuary Program and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Another teacher workshop is planned for the summer of 1998.

The teachers who attended the 1997 session left with boxes of resource materials and hearts full of memories. Not surprisingly, they also handed out report cards.

Richard Beach, a Delaware teacher, scored it this way: "The Institute allowed me to better understand the complexities involved in protecting the Estuary by putting me on location and providing a wide variety of hands-on experiences. It was a wonderful program."

Noted a New Jersey teacher: "It has been an incredible learning experience. The teaching and reference resources provided are outstanding. The entire week was magical and confirmed how important the Estuary is for my students. The link to the Estuary is now stronger than ever."

"It was the best program I ever attended," remarked a teacher from Pennsylvania.

For information on the 1998 Delaware Estuary Education Institute, contact Kathy Kline, Delaware Estuary Partnership, 302-793-1701. For information on teacher programs of the Delaware Watershed Consortium, contact Estelle Ruppert, program coordinator



TOP: Where are we? Teachers participating in the Delaware Estuary Educational Institute program on board the oyster schooner *A.J. Meerwald* try their hands at nautical navigation.

CENTER: An ancient mode of transportation still has a place on the Delaware, where the old oyster schooner *A.J. Meerwald*, her sails silently driving, still serves as a school ship and ghostly quiet base for sampling the water and life of the Delaware Estuary.

BOTTOM: The expressions on the faces of these teacher-participants in the week-long 1997 Delaware Estuary Educational Institute program say more than words ever could about the natural world beyond the classroom walls.

for the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks at the Jacobsburg (Pa.) Environmental Education Center, 610-746-2806.

<http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/>

Our Web Site Proliferates

Since the debut of its web site, <http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/>, in 1996, the Commission has posted a large quantity of water-related information. Interest in the DRBC web site continues to grow based on the number of “hits”—accesses by the public via the Internet and World Wide Web—that it receives. The graph shows how many hits to the home page alone and the trend. The number of total hits to all pages on our site is much greater because we have rapidly increased the number of pages.

Regular features now include hydrologic information, meeting notices, minutes of Commission meetings, and water quality information. Two of the most popular pages are the New York City Delaware Basin Reservoir Storage graph and the Flow and Storage Data page.

The Commission updates these pages every day. The Storage Graph shows the combined three in-basin water supply reservoirs (Pepacton, Cannonsville, and Neversink). The flows for the Delaware, Schuylkill,

and Lehigh Rivers are presented in the Flow Data page. Links are provided to real-time stream-flow data sites for New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. River statements concerning flood conditions are also available. For those interested in droughts, a link is provided to the National Drought Mitigation Center.

The Commissioners adopted the web page's banner as the official DRBC logo. Designed by Thomas Brand, Project Review Branch Head, the logo is being incorporated in the Commission's publications and other outreach media.

One of several major additions to the web site during 1997 was the Regional Information Management Service (RIMS). RIMS began in 1995 as a computer bulletin board service that provided information about the Delaware Estuary. The bulletin board format was successful, but as more and more computer users began to use the Internet, the bulletin board became obsolete.

The number of web site hits shows that the public has great interest in water-related recreation information. The site contains information for specific areas as well as canoe and boating interests. There is even a link to the U.S. Coast Guard Safe Boating site. Another link to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides high- and low-tide predictions for 16 locations on the Delaware River and Bay.

The web has proven to be a useful tool beyond expectations for both Commission staff and the public. During the 1997 drought warning, for example, media reporters often accessed the site for information about the Commission and the Delaware River Basin—an expanded interest reflected in the increased number of hits in October. As the Commissioners labored over the DRBC Vision Statement and the Retreat process, they used the web to inform the public and to solicit comments. Future plans for the web site include addition of downloadable regulations and other documents.

The DRBC web site is hosted by the State of New Jersey.

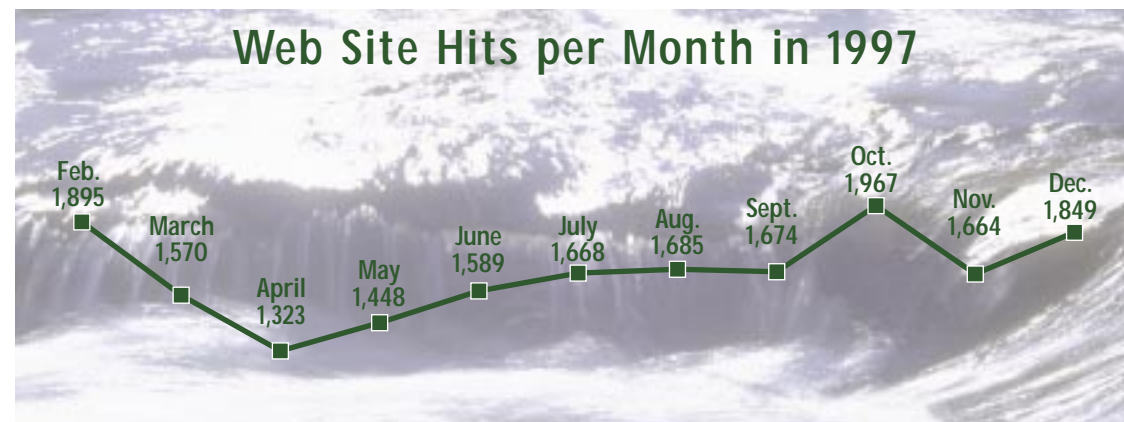
DRBC DISPLAY

Showing It Like It Is

As part of an effort to expand the Commission's public outreach program, we bought a new table-top display. The light-weight and easily transportable display was set up in a variety of locations ranging from the RiverFest in Narrowsburg, N.Y., to Delaware Bay Day in Port Norris, N.J., and Coast Day in Lewes, Del. These events are very popular among local residents and area visitors. Delaware Bay Day and Coast Day are geared toward educating people about water-related issues in tidal areas.

Staff also used the display at special events, such as the Delaware Estuary Program Monitoring Conference in Newark, Del., and the Heritage Conservancy meeting in Washington Crossing, Pa.

Curious visitors to the Commission's traveling exhibit inform themselves on a pleasant Saturday afternoon about the river basin that is central to their environment.



The DRBC's web site has proven to be very popular. October saw the highest number of hits, reflecting an interest in data posted about the latest drought.





A 50-foot model of the Delaware River fills the DRBC lobby as the students of a local school who built it from paper-mâché as a class project explain it to their elders.

STUDENTS BUILD A RIVER

All the Delaware at a Glance

In observance of Earth Week, sixth graders at the Lambertville, N.J., Public School built a 50-foot-long paper-mâché working model of their local river, the Delaware. Then the youngsters transported the huge display some 10 miles downstream to the Commission's offices in West Trenton, where it occupied the lobby for some weeks. Visitors to the Commission, perhaps unable to grasp the idea of the entire Delaware from the portion that flows by not far from the DRBC office, could gain a better sense of its extent and of the Commission's mission from this model.

For the students, the rewards were the satisfaction of a job well done, intimate acquaintance with a natural feature that in part defines their world, local fame, and all the pizza they could eat.

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

Not Just a Regional Influence

The Commission continues to be a model institution for comprehensive water resources management. States continue to squabble over water—both quantity and quality. Foreign nations, especially those of developing countries, as well as former and present Communist regimes, are also grappling with various aspects of their water management.

In the U.S., the DRBC was used as a model by the framers of two new interstate compacts. Congress approved compacts in 1997 to help Alabama, Florida, and Georgia settle their longstanding and sometimes bitter feud over shared water resources. House Joint Resolution 91 (H.J.R. 91) created a compact between the three states concerning the Apalachicola–Chatahoochee–Flint River Basin, while H.J.R. 92 established the Alabama–Coosa–Tallapoosa River Basin Compact. DRBC Executive Director Gerald M. Hansler advised and consulted with officials of all three states and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in planning for these compacts.

The states of Arkansas and Oklahoma were in dispute over water quality in the interstate Illinois River during 1997. Oklahoma was chagrined with phosphorus loadings entering from Arkansas, both municipal point and nonpoint sources. Evidently, discharges from both states were accelerating a eutrophication problem downstream in an Oklahoma reservoir. Randy Young, Executive Director of the Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, consulted with DRBC officials concerning the way the Commission handles such problems. He acquired copies of the Commission's Compact and of

its rules and regulations relating to water quality. Both states used these documents to amicably develop a joint control program.

Three foreign governments received study tours at the Commission in 1997: Jordan, Turkey, and the People's Republic of China. Also, Commission employees addressed two different groups of Chinese water experts on comprehensive watershed management at the invitation of the Region III office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This appears to be a rather common request now, since the EPA does not concern itself with both water quantity and quality. The Commission is rare in that its powers and authorities cover both. The Commission regulates water quality and effluent standards as well as surface- and ground-water allocations.

Finally, the World Bank, during its annual week-long "World Water Week" in December 1997, called on the Commission's expertise in comprehensive water management. Representatives from many foreign countries attended this meeting, held in Annapolis, Md., to receive new insights into water management policies and programs—and even pitfalls.

A group of mayors from several cities in Turkey, invited to the Commission for a briefing on river basin management, brave the cold of a Delaware winter for a first-hand look at the river.

